



A decorative border with a repeating floral and vine motif surrounds the text.

CHILDREN'S BOOK
COLLECTION



LIBRARY OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES

trap-1

unwounded



This book belonged
to Hannah Battersby

John Leyland

July 26th - 1857.



"Why Charles! is it you?"

THREE

Village Stories,
Principally designed
for the Use of
Sunday Schools.

BY A LADY.



L O N D O N .

Printed & sold by John Marshall,
N^o 17. Queen Street, Cheapside.
& N^o 4 Aldemary Church Yard.



T H R E E

VILLAGE STORIES, &c.

A ROLLING STONE NEVER GATHERS MOSS ;
OR, THE LIFE AND ADVENTURES OF
CHARLES RESTLESS.

CHARLES RESTLESS was a smart handy lad, of about nineteen, he had lived with farmer *Steady*, as under carter, for near four years, during which time he had behaved himself honestly and soberly : he was apt to be careless in the discharge of his business, and sometimes negligent ; but the farmer, who was a considerate man, made allowances for the giddiness of youth ; and though he frequently reprov'd *Charles* for his faults it always was with mildness, notwithstanding which, he observed *Charles*, all of a sudden,

B

grow

grow sulky, and instead of attending patiently to his reproofs, betrayed an inclination to reply saucily.

Farmer *Steady* was very particular in the care he took of his cattle, and all the creatures of different kinds that belonged to his farm: he used to say, though God had given power to man over every beast of the field, it did not appear that man had any right or pretence to ill treat them, or wantonly destroy their lives. In consequence of this way of thinking, his horses, from being well fed and well littered, were stronger, and able to work more and longer than those of other people's who were not so well attended to;— never being unnecessarily struck with the whip, or terrified by rough language, they were less liable to start, or run away, defects which proceed from timidity rather than from viciousness. The

The cows of his farm were always driven gently to and from the pasture; the pigs and poultry were plentifully fed, and never tormented; in short, all these animals prowled peaceably round the farm, and seemed to enjoy their existence in the manner nature intended they should.

It was pleasant to observe how the poultry, pigs, pigeons, and dogs promiscuously flocked round the farmer whenever he made his appearance in the farm yard. One evening, as he went into the stable he found the horses ill littered, their feet and legs all covered with dirt as they came from the plough, and no hay in the rack. He called immediately for *Charles*. He was not to be found: in half an hour he came home. Farmer *Steady* then reproached him for his carelessness and cruelty in

neglecting the horses, and added, if you did not feel for them as animals sensible of pain and hunger as yourself (though without the means of complaining of your neglect) still you might have considered them as part of my property committed to your care, and therefore it was your duty to attend to them. *Charles* scratched his head, and muttered between his teeth, "If master was not pleased—better provide himself—year was up—he was ready to go, for the matter of that." The farmer was determined he would not be hasty, therefore he disregarded these half-uttered sentences, and after having stood by whilst *Charles* served the horses, sent him to-bed without further altercation.

The next morning *Charles* came up to the farmer and said, "Please, Master, to get a new man." "How now, *Charles!*

Charles! why do you want to quit my service? have not I been an indulgent and good master to you?" "Why, yes, to be sure he had; but he wanted to better himself." "How better yourself, *Charles?*" "Why, get more wages and less work." "Certainly," said the farmer, "that would be bettering yourself; but what if in the end you were to get more work and less wages?" "Of that he was not afraid, and go he would." The farmer finding it was to no purpose to argue with him, and feeling unwilling to keep a servant against his inclination, paid him his wages, and bid him farewell, telling him to remember the old saying: *A rolling stone never gathers moss.* *Charles* paid no attention to his master's last words, but having packed up his cloaths in a bundle, he slung it on a stick across

his shoulder, and was walking over the grounds pretty briskly, when he met *Mary*, the dairy maid; she had been absent a few days with her friends, who lived some miles off. *Mary* came into the farmer's service at the same time with *Charles*, she was a neat tidy looking girl. *Charles* had taken a fancy to her, and she, on her part, was sincerely attached to him; in the village they were looked upon as sweethearts, and it was thought in time they would be asked in the church. Very different were their sensations at this meeting. *Mary*, whose whole heart and affections were fixed on *Charles*, expressed, in her smiling countenance, the most sincere pleasure at seeing him. *Charles*, whose affection for *Mary* was not strong enough to counterbalance the number of projects he had in his head for his future advancement

advancement in life, would gladly have avoided meeting her; he looked confused and distressed, and but ill requited the kindness with which she greeted him. She asked him if he had come out on purpose to meet her? "But no," said she, recollecting herself, "that bundle on your shoulder convinces me you are going farther; when do you come back again?" "I don't know," said *Charles*, with much embarrassment, "perhaps—very soon; but make haste home, *Mary*, it grows late; master will scold if you don't get in before it is dark," so saying, he coldly shook her hand, and trudged on as fast as his legs would carry him. Poor *Mary*, not understanding what all this could mean, fell a crying, and came into the farm yard wiping her tears with her apron. Farmer *Steady* soon discovered

covered the cause of her sorrow, and by degrees, told her *Charles* was gone to seek his fortune, that she had better forget him, as he was a thoughtless lad not worth her notice. *Mary* wept as if her heart would break, and for a long, long time regretted the loss of her lover, to whom we shall now return.

Charles was not void of feeling, and the small portion of affection he felt for *Mary* was increased, by observing the distress his behaviour had occasioned her. For the next two miles as he advanced on his journey he was tempted to turn back again, make his peace with the farmer, marry *Mary*, and settle in his village; but before he came to any resolution he was overtaken by a stage coach, and, without further reflection, he bargained with the coachman to take him

him

him as an outside passenger the next two stages for a couple of shillings. It was eleven o'clock when the coach arrived at the town to which *Charles* had engaged a passage; the company in the coach were to sup at the inn. *Charles*, who had left his former place without any plan as to his future settlement, began now to reflect what was to become of him. He sat down in a corner of the kitchen, and having pulled out of a little canvass bag the two shillings he was to pay for his fare, he sorrowfully told over his money, and found himself worth only eighteen shillings and seven-pence. Hitherto he had always been used to have a plentiful supper provided for him, he now was aware he must pay for whatever he called for; conscious that his means were low, he ventured no further than
to

to ask for a pot of beer and some bread and cheese, to this meal he sat down in solitude; for though the kitchen was full of people, moving about, and talking briskly of their own affairs, still were they all unmindful of *Charles*. He now began to regret the society of the farm, the idea of *Mary* shot into his mind, he felt remorse that he had deceived her, but still the hopes of bettering himself, and making his fortune, operated too powerfully on him to allow him to think of returning; mean time the coach was again going to set forward, and whilst *Charles* was deliberating whether he should or should not proceed on the top of it, crack went the whip, and it drove from the door, so he was fain to agree for a lodging at the inn; he was shewn into a small room with three truckle beds, two were occupied by some carriers, and

and the third was for him. Had *Charles* been disposed to sleep the snoring of his companions would have prevented him, but at day-break they left their beds to proceed on their journey. *Charles* lay for a few hours, and when he arose he went into the inn yard, where observing the ostler with many low bows shutting the door of a chaise and four, and seeing the gentleman in it throw him out a shilling, he thought to himself, if he could be an ostler he should soon make his fortune. Without more ado he goes to the ostler, and offers his service to assist in the care of the horses.

“Why,” said the ostler “I knows nothing of thee, mon; howfomedever, let a body zee what thee canst do. ’Twas but yesterday our *Jae* ran away, and, mayhap, thou mayest tread in his shoes. *Charles* was willing to shew
his

his handy work; he had been used to the care of horses at the farm, but he knew nothing of the chaise harness; the mistakes he made at first caused the ostler to laugh in his face, calling him lubberly plough-boy. *Charles* was not of a very patient temper, nevertheless, he restrained his anger, and the ostler finding him willing to learn, (though he took but little pains to teach him) spoke to his master, and he was established in the inn as under ostler. Here he led a very laborious life, small were his profits, and constant was his work. Six months passed away, during which time he made acquaintance with some gentlemen's servants in the town, and, by means of one of them, he was recommended as a stable boy in Mr. *Jolly's* family. This gentleman was a determined fox hunter, and kept many fine hunters,

hunters, on which he bestowed the greatest care and attention. As he frequently went into the stable he saw *Charles*, was pleased with his appearance, and promoted him to be his groom.

In this service *Charles* might have lived with tolerable comfort, but the idea of bettering himself was still uppermost in his mind, and now he wished to be a footman. Upon some slight pretence he gave his master warning, and got himself recommended to a Mrs. *Mildmay*, a very respectable, worthy woman, whose family was conducted with great order and regularity.

The tranquility of this house, opposed to the noise and riot of 'squire *Jolly's*, so far from pleasing *Charles* was irksome to him, and he soon left his place: in short, in the six following

C

years

years he had no less than eight places. From his so frequently changing no one liked to take him into their service, and he was reduced to enlist as a soldier.

Though military discipline appeared insufferably hard to him, it was to no purpose to complain; but in his despair he took to drinking, this, together with constant vexation and uneasiness of mind, brought him into an ill state of health, and being incapable of doing his duty, at the end of three years he received his discharge. All he had for it now was to return to his parish. The colonel of the regiment very humanely gave him a couple of guineas to bear his expences on the road, for, alas! he was full many a mile from his village.

He took a place in a waggon for the first day's journey, and then proceeded slowly on foot. The ninth day (which

was

was *Sunday*) he got within ten miles of home, his money was all gone, he found himself so exhausted for want of food, that he determined to beg charity at a small white house that was by the road side; the house lay behind a neat little garden, and at the door stood a woman dressed in her *Sunday's* cloaths, in her arms she held a little infant, and near her stood two children of four and five years old. *Charles*, who had been unused to beg, scarcely raised his eyes from the ground when he pulled off his hat and asked a small relief, but how was his distress increased when he heard a voice, the tone of which he thought he remembered, exclaim, "Why, *Charles*! is it you? He looked up, and beheld *Mary*. She coloured, but, to hide her confusion, ran into the house and fetched him out some beer and some cold

meat, and bid him eat and be welcome. His heart was too full to speak, he drank a little of the beer, and putting the provisions into his wallet, made a bow, and hastening into the road, never stopped till he arrived in his village.

It was about one o'clock, the church service was just over, the bells were ringing merrily, and all the villagers were returning to their houses. *Charles's* person was considerably altered in the course of his twelve years' absence; his face was haggard and pale from sickness, and he looked paler too from the emotion of his unexpected interview with *Mary*: in short, he was so totally altered, that none of his former friends and neighbours recollected him.

Farmer *Steady*, seeing a man in a ragged uniform coat, walked up to him, and giving him six-pence, said; "My friend,

friend, I am not a rich man, yet it is but just, according to my way of thinking, to bestow a small matter to relieve the distress of one, who, by his profession, protects our property at the hazard of his life; take this trifle to drink the king's health."

Charles burst into tears, and cried out, "Why, Master, don't you know me?" "Know you!" said farmer *Steady*, "as I live and breathe it is *Charles Restless!*" "Ah, Master! truly have I repented not following your good advice. I have met with nothing but sorrows, disappointments, and mortifications since I left your service." "Cheer up, my lad," said *Steady*, "come home with me, and let us try what can be done for you." *Charles* thankfully accepted the farmer's invitation, and in the course of the evening told him all his adventures. The

farmer did not oppress him with severe reproofs, but kindly compassionated his sufferings.

Charles was anxious to hear something of *Mary*, yet knew not how to inquire. At length the farmer asked him if he had forgotten his old love? (without waiting for an answer) "Ah! poor soul," added he, "she took on sadly after you was gone; for four years she expected your return; but hearing nothing of you, she concluded you had forgotten her, and at length she married *Samuel Meanwell*, an honest young man, who, from his great diligence and sobriety, two years ago got to be made bailiff at 'squire *Worthy's*. Since then *Samuel* and his wife live in clover; they have got a nice house by the road side. The 'squire and his lady, who are very charitable good people,

people, are always doing kind things by them. Madam herself stood god-mother to their last child. *Mary* is the best of wives, and loves her husband dearly." Here *Charles* fetched a deep sigh; which the farmer observing, said: "Never grieve, my lad, try to recover your health and spirits, and don't lament a loss that can be so easily repaired; wives, and good ones too, are to be had in plenty at all times and seasons. But what can be done for you? With your stable waiting, and table waiting, and your swords and your muskets, have you forgot to handle the plough?" "Why no, Master; but I am too weak at present to earn my bread." "Well, we will see what the parish will do for you."

Accordingly the farmer applied to the overseers, and got an allowance for *Charles*; moreover, he kindly permitted
him

him to sleep at the farm, and often gave him a hearty meal. In a couple of months *Charles* recovered his health. At first he worked for the farmers in the yard lands, but when he regained his strength he got constant employ as a labourer, and subsisted very comfortably on his earnings. In two year's time he in a great measure recovered his spirits, and farmer *Steady* observing he was now satisfied in his situation, took occasion to remark on his former follies. "Had you, *Charles*, been satisfied with the condition in which Providence had placed you, you would never have wasted twelve of the best years of your life in seeking situations you were not qualified to fill. You have learnt, by sad experience, the folly of such pursuits: had you invariably remained in your village, and made the most of the advantages of

of your situation, you would have been a happier man than you now are; you would have avoided many scenes of distress and misery, that were not only painful to you at the time, but which you can never think of hereafter without regretting the folly by which you exposed yourself to them. Tell your tale to others, and let them learn by your example, that, *A rolling stone never gathers moss.*”

THE MISCHIEFS OF GOSSIPING; OR, THE
HISTORY OF DAME PRATE-A-PACE, AND
HER GRANDDAUGHTER BRIDGET.

DAME *Prate-a-pace* was a widow of about sixty years old, she was frugal, honest, and sober, and would have been a useful and respectable member of society but for one failing, which was, an immoderate love of talking; she would chatter from sun rise to sun set: it may appear severe to condemn as a fault, what appears at first sight only a trifling defect in a character, yet to this defect may be attributed many serious misfortunes which befel Dame *Prate-a-pace* in the course of her life. That we may the more clearly prove the truth of our assertion, it will be necessary

necessary to trace the old dame's history back to the earlier period of her life.

Her husband died when she was thirty years old, leaving her with five young children, and a sufficient competency to have supported them comfortably in their humble station of life, had she been as diligent as she was frugal; but the love of talking so prevailed in her disposition, that it seemed to supersede every obligation of duty, and every sentiment of affection; she daily fauntered up and down the village with a stocking on her arm (which she pretended to be darning) leaving her children to the care of a young parish girl whom she had hired as a servant; as they grew older she directed this girl to take them to school, and here indeed they were taught to read; but of what avails a little instruction at school,

school,

school, if the morals and dispositions of children are not attended to at home! In such attentions Dame *Prate-a-pace* was shamefully negligent, indeed her habits of gossiping from house to house took up so much of the day, that she had not leisure to discharge her domestic duties, and her children were almost entirely neglected by her; whilst they were little they were dirty and humourfome, as they grew bigger they became idle and mischievous; the boys grew up indolent and drunken, the girls lazy and impertinent; so far from being a comfort to their mother in her old age, they caused her nothing but vexations. It is not, however, our intention to trace their separate adventures, we shall only mention the eldest son, who married a sober young girl in the parish, to whom he behaved extremely

ill

ill for some years, and at length having from drunkenness contracted debts which he could not pay, he ran away, leaving his poor wife with three young children to provide for.

Notwithstanding his bad behaviour to her she was attached to him, and was heart-broken at finding herself so cruelly deserted by him, yet she struggled hard to support herself and her children, and for two or three years got on pretty well, she then unfortunately got the small-pox, of which she and two of her children died. *Bridget*, the youngest, recovered, and was taken care of by her grandmother; the old dame was doatingly fond of her, and meant to do every thing which was kind by her; but her propensity for talking (a vice which unhappily increases with age) counteracted

teracted all her good intentions. Instead of instructing *Bridget* in what might have made her a tidy servant, or a notable wife, the old woman used to take her about gossiping in the village. Many hours did they lose every day sauntering from house to house, hearing all that was said, and repeating all they heard, and of course making many quarrels and disputes amongst the neighbours. *Bridget* naturally preferred this idle life to spinning or knitting; she was withal good-humoured, had a reasonable share of common sense, and was a very handsome girl, no wonder therefore as she grew up that she was admired. Young *Simon Jenkins* courted her for his wife, and it would have been an exceedingly good match for her, but old farmer *Jenkins*, aware of the indolent manner in which

which she had been brought up, and having a great dislike to the gossiping character of Dame *Prate-a-pace*, interposed, and forbid his son to think any more about *Bridget*.

No sooner had the old dame heard this than she grew outrageous against the old farmer: the volubility of her tongue got the better of her reason, and instead of behaving quietly and patiently, and thereby perhaps bringing matters about again, what did she do but abuse the *Jenkinsses* in the grossest manner, inventing all manner of stories against them; to be sure she only whispered them, conscious they were not true; but secrets communicated to twenty or thirty people are hardly ever kept. *Bridget*, in imitation of her grandmother, chattered away at a great rate amongst the young people, and abused

the *Jenkinsses* most shamefully; in short, she was evidently more angered than hurt at her disappointment, yet some of her young friends that really loved her, pitied her, others, that were envious of her good fortune, rejoiced; but, I am sorry to add, all joined in laughing at the absurdity of her behaviour. Her grandmother had well nigh got into a sad scrape; it having been reported to old farmer *Jenkins* that Dame *Prate-a-pace* had said he was a dishonest man, he threatened to bring an action against her for defamation, she was, however, persuaded to go and ask his pardon, which he kindly granted her; but she was sorely vexed at the disgrace she had been exposed to, for the story had made much talk, and was well known throughout the parish, and young *Jenkins* happening himself soon after

after to overhear *Bridget* abusing him, concluded she would make but a shrewish kind of wife, and gave up all thoughts of her, and soon after married a sober young woman whom his father recommended.

This was a grievous disappointment to the old dame and her grand-daughter; and it was long before they got the better of it. Happy would it have been had it corrected in them both the inordinate love of gossiping; but though it was checked for a time, it burst forth again. In a few weeks they resumed their habit of sauntering from house to house, prying into secrets, and revealing in one house what they had seen and heard in another, and constantly raising disturbances; mean time *Bridget* was seeking for a place; she was too well known as a busy-body

in her own village to hope for a service, but she wrote to an aunt of her's who lived at some distance, and she recommended her to the housekeeper at the Rev. Mr. *Strictly's*, where she was placed as nursery maid.

Mr. and Mrs. *Strictly* were very respectable good people, and in their family she might have lived very happily: she was careful in discharging the duties of her place, and her good-humour and attention to the children, pleased Mrs. *Strictly* so much, that *Bridget* soon became a favourite. No sooner did she perceive the partiality shewn her by her mistress, than, by way of increasing it, she officiously began telling tales of the other servants: as these tales were mostly without any foundation, and as Mrs. *Strictly* greatly disliked all quarrels and altercations in her family, she

she immediately discharged *Bridget*, and as those who speak ill of others make many enemies, scandalous were the causes assigned for her sudden dismissal; some said she had stolen the children's frocks; others that she had taken some money off a table; others, that she had taken to dram-drinking; and, as ill news flies fast, all these reports preceded her arrival in the village, and the old dame heard them all from one and t'other, and her heart was well nigh broken when *Bridget* herself appeared, and justified her conduct; but it would have been of little avail, had not Mrs. *Strictly* by chance heard of those stories, and being a candid and a just woman, she wrote a letter to the grandmother, asserting *Bridget* was not dismissed for dishonesty or for drunkenness, but that she was a gossip and

and a tale bearer, and would have made mischief in her family, therefore she had discharged her.

Such a character from a person of Mrs. *Strictly's* integrity, a character too which had been too clearly proved in other instances, made it hopeless to place *Bridget* in any service, so she was compelled to remain at home, spin in the winter, and work in the fields in harvest time. Thus she lived for six years, when old Dame *Prate-a-pace* died.

Bridget was now three or four and twenty, and left entirely to take care of herself: she endeavoured to make amends for her past follies by bridling her tongue; but the habit of gossiping is difficult to be got the better of, however, she behaved tolerably well in this respect, and being still very well
looking,

looking, *John Surly*, a carter, an honest sober man, but somewhat rough in his temper, offered to marry her; she accepted his proposals, and they were married soon after. He took her home to his family, for he lived with his mother, a decrepid old woman, and his sister, a single woman about forty.

Bridget did not much like her new relations; she made some slight attempts to spread dissention amongst them, but *John*, well aware of her character, advised her as mildly as he could (which, truth to say, was somewhat roughly) to beware how she endeavoured, by her chattering, to make mischief in his family. *Bridget* was nettled at his reproof, and when *John* was out of the way she behaved so unkindly to the poor old woman, that she was forced to complain to her son. *Bridget* protested

tested she had done all that lay in her power to please the old woman, but she was never satisfied. *John*, who knew his mother to be of a very quiet easy temper, believed not a word that *Bridget* said against her, but flew into a passion, and threatened, if she ever behaved unkindly to his mother again he would make her repent of it. *Bridget*, who knew not what she was to expect from these violent threats, was very much frightened, and for a short time conducted herself, to all appearance, so well that they lived very comfortably.

John's sister was a meek inoffensive woman, she not only worked hard to maintain herself, but now they lived so happily, she was ever ready to assist *Bridget* in the management of the house: of this *Bridget* in a little time took an unfair advantage, and would often

often leave all the care and trouble on her sister, whilst she went prating about the village. It happened one night, when *John* came from plough, that he found no supper; his sister told him the greens were boiled, but that *Bridget* had been out two hours to fetch a bit of meat, and that she had been waiting all that time for her return. *John*, whose anger was perhaps sharpened by hunger, snatched up his hat, and, without more ado, went into the street, he heard *Bridget's* voice at a neighbour's house, where she was vociferating very loudly, and he plainly overheard her say, she led the life of a dog; that mother was never satisfied, and that more than once *John* had beat her. "'Tis false," cried *John*, bursting into the room, "I never offered to strike her in my life; I am not such a coward

as to beat a woman neither; but I tell you once for all, *Bridget*, if you won't stay at home and mind your business, and leave off gossiping with your neighbours, I will turn you out of doors, and you may shift for yourself; but if you will behave quietly and soberly, as other wives do, I am very ready to kiss and be friends, on condition you contradict what you have said of mother and me, and ask pardon for having said it, for you know not a word of it is true."

Bridget was so frightened at the sudden appearance of *John*, and the angry look he put on, that she stood trembling and sobbing, and could not speak a word; but she walked towards the door, and seemed inclined to go home with him; however, he would not let her proceed till she had recovered her speech
enough

enough to ask his pardon, and assure her neighbours she had belied both him and his mother; but if he would forgive her this once, she would never offend him in future. It cost her a great deal to make this public submission; but it answered a good purpose, as she afterwards behaved much better. Staying at home and working were irksome to her at first, and she used to sit and cry day after day, but *John* was of too rough a nature to be melted by her tears; he knew, from experience, nothing but keeping her at home would preserve peace, not only in his own house, but in the village, for if she once got out she would again fall into her habit of gossiping.

After this last adventure she behaved more discreetly, yet was her character for tale-bearing so established, that

E

whenever

whenever an idle story was circulated in the village, people would laugh and say, 'I warrant you this is *one of gossip Bridget's tales.*'

Thus did this woman, though she bore a good character, from this single failing (which is indeed a failing of a very mischievous tendency) get herself laughed at, and despised by all her neighbours. Learn, from her example, to be prudent and discreet in your discourse, never officiously meddle in the affairs of other people, which do not concern you. Avoid the habit of immoderate talking, which is generally importunate and troublesome, at best a waste of time, and frequently productive of mischief to others as well as to yourself.

THE REWARDS OF HONEST INDUSTRY; OR,
THE HISTORY OF THOMAS AND JENNY
MEADOWS.

THOMAS MEADOWS was the youngest son of *John Meadows*, a day-labourer, an honest and respectable man; for respect is not the attribute of any particular rank in life, it is justly due to every man who conducts himself with propriety in the situation in which Providence has thought fit to place him; and such was the case of *John Meadows*; he had married early in life, and bred up a numerous family of children in the habits of sobriety, strict honesty, and assiduous industry.

Thomas, whose history I am about to write, at the age of twenty-two, with his father's consent and approbation, married *Jenny Fairfield*, a worthy young woman, who, like her husband, had been well brought up.

The parents on both sides could give their children but a small portion of money, just sufficient to fit up the cottage they were to live in; their daily labour was to procure their maintenance. *Thomas* was active and laborious; the diligence and faithfulness with which he did the work assigned him, secured him constant employment, and made all the farmers desirous of having him in their service; for *Thomas* was not like too many others, an eye-serving man, whether he was or was not over-looked he was equally diligent; on a principle of conscience, he felt he had no right to receive wages
for

for work he neglected, and frequently was his diligence rewarded by a cup of good ale, or a six-pence extraordinary given by his master at the end of the week.

Jenny, on her part, was no less industrious; she spun great part of the day, she kept her house clean and neat, and was always dressed tidily; one of her pleasantest occupations was to provide her husband with a comfortable meal when he came in from his work; and she always received him with cheerfulness and good-humour, this rendered his home so pleasant to him, that he never felt disposed to go to the ale-house. Whilst they were eating their homely supper they used to make several arrangements for the future: they at this period earned nine shillings a week between them, they agreed it would be prudent to set aside a little of

this money against a rainy day, they calculated they could live on seven shillings a week. When harvest came on of course they earned a great deal more, for they worked by the acre, and *Jenny* was a notable reaper.

There was a piece of waste ground behind their house, this *Thomas* fenced round of evenings after he came from work, then he dugged it up, and put some potatoes, and cabbages, and some pot-herbs in it. He contrived to get a swarm of bees, and these increasing in two or three years, they had a good stock of bees. He heard of the double hives, by which he found he could take nearly twice the quantity of honey, without destroying the poor bees who so industriously laboured to make it.

Thomas and *Jenny* were much respected and beloved by all the good people

people in the village; for though they lived much at home, and were never seen gossiping and sauntering about the street, wasting their own time, and intruding on that of other people, still were they very neighbourly, and ready to call on any of their friends that were sick, or that in any distress required their attendance.

They were very exact in going to church, and sometimes *Sunday* afternoon they would go and visit *John Meadows*, or *William Fairfield* (*Jenny's* father,) the two families used to meet at one of their houses, and here they passed the evening in cheerful conversation.

Thus happily did *John* and *Jenny* live for several years; they had four children, and *Jenny* expected soon to lie-in of the fifth; but misfortunes now were about to befall them. It

was

was the middle of summer, and the season for haymaking: *Jenny*, from her situation, could not work in the field. One evening, as she was sitting at her door, a farmer in the neighbourhood gave her some broad beans; these she knew *Thomas* was particularly fond of, so she sat down at the cottage door and made her two eldest children assist in shelling them, whilst the two little ones played upon the ground. Poor *Jenny* pleased herself with the thoughts of boiling these beans with a bit of bacon for her husband's supper. Night drew on and he did not return; she put the two little children to-bed, allowing the others to sit up to supper. Still *Thomas* did not appear, and *Jenny* began to grow very uneasy, at last, whilst she was standing by the chimney to see if the pot boiled, the eldest boy said, 'There runs grandfather

Meadows

Meadows as fast as he can run.' 'Which way?' cried *Jenny*, frightened at she knew not what. 'Oh! a great way off, all across the fields,' said the little boy. Poor *Jenny's* mind misgave her; she ran to the door, and saw at distance a crowd of people carrying something like a hurdle, it immediately occurred to her some misfortune had befallen *Thomas*, she ran screaming into the street, and brought out several of the neighbours, mean time the crowd advanced, and, sure enough, it was poor *Thomas* they were bringing, he had fallen from the top of a hayrick and had broken his leg; the exquisite pain he suffered made him look pale and ghastly; at sight of his altered looks *Jenny* fell into fits, the neighbours carried her home, her fright hastened on her labour, and she was soon

soon delivered of a dead child; meanwhile *Thomas*, attended by his father, (who wept as if his heart would break) was brought into the kitchen, where a bed was put up for him, and a surgeon sent for to set his leg; but great was the distress in the family, the good women in the parish were assembled round *Jenny*, who, in the midst of all her sufferings, expressed the most anxious solicitude for her husband; they had the prudence to conceal the accident from her, only telling he had been seized with a fit from over working himself, but he would soon be well. She was pacified with this account for the present, but the next day she renewed her inquiries, saying, she was certain if her husband was not very bad indeed he would come and see her: in short, her mother, who was a very reasonable old woman,

woman, undertook to tell *Jenny* the truth in so gentle a manner, that it should not materially hurt her, at least she thought the anxiety she expressed at not seeing him might be more fatal to her, so she began by saying, *Thomas* had been hurt by a fall, and, by degrees, told her he had broken his leg, but that it was set, and that there was every reason to hope he would in time get quite well.

Poor *Jenny* was a good deal affected by this intelligence at first, but after a little time she grew composed, and was truly thankful her husband had not been killed; for he had fallen from a very high rick upon some pitching.

In a few weeks *Jenny* got about again, but she was very feeble, and so taken up with attending on her husband, that she had little leisure to mind her spinning.

Thomas

Thomas did not soon get well of his accident; indeed he never entirely recovered the use of his leg, nor was he able to work so hard as he had done, mean time here was a long bill owing to the surgeon; he was a humane and a considerate man, therefore not only he charged his attendance as low as he possibly could, but he even retrenched a fifth of his bill, still medicines and attendance for two months came to near six pounds. Alas! this exceeded the little sum *Thomas* and *Jenny* had scraped up, but their parents assisted them as far as they could, which was but little, as they were only labourers; however, amongst them the sum was made up, and the bill paid, to the great satisfaction of these good people, for they were both so strictly honest, they would have parted with every thing they had rather than have made debts.

Thomas used to say, he never could call any money his own whilst he knew he owed it to other people; and though from his known honesty he would have had credit given him, he never would contract any debts. Now he and his wife were left, as it were, without a shilling to begin the world again, with the disadvantages of *Thomas* being lame, and *Fenny* grown weak and sickly, still they were never heard to murmur or complain, the grateful cheerfulness with which they used to talk of their happier days, and the patient resignation with which they yielded to their reverse of fortune, made them beloved and respected by every body.

There lived, a few miles from this village, an elderly gentleman of moderate fortune, who was very kind

in assisting the sober and industrious poor, but he was no less severe in discountenancing the profligate and idle. It happened this gentleman heard of *Thomas's* accident from the surgeon who attended him, and hearing him at the same time give *Thomas* an excellent character, he determined he would go and see him. Accordingly, one fine autumn morning, as *Jenny* was cleaning out her house, she saw squire *Mildmay* ride into the village; he came up to her door, and giving his horse to his groom, entered into conversation with *Jenny*; he asked her several questions respecting her husband's accident, to these she replied respectfully, but avoided entering into long details; she was well aware it would be both impertinent and tiresome in her unnecessarily to take up the time of

of

of a person, who so kindly condescended to take an interest in her concerns, she contented herself therefore with simply answering the questions addressed to her, without subjoining any remarks of her own.

This modest discretion of speech was highly approved of by Mr. *Mildmay*, he was also much pleased with the affection she expressed for her husband: he called her four children (who were all taken up looking at his horse) giving to each a shilling, and, bidding *Jenny* good-morrow, he rode away, saying, he would call again soon.

The children of course gave the money to their mother. Four shillings coming so unexpectedly were very acceptable; she recollected there was a shilling owing to the shoemaker for mending

mending shoes, this she went, and paid directly, with another shilling she bought a bit of bacon, which, together with some greens she cut in the garden, she knew would make a comfortable meal for *Thomas* when he came home, and this time she was not disappointed, he came in soon after six in the evening, tired and fatigued; for though he exerted himself to do his work he was still very weak and reduced, and labouring hard was more than he could well bear, and since his accident they, from being reduced in circumstances, were obliged to live more frugally, and he often supped on only a piece of bread and cheese. When he came in and saw the pot on the fire, he appeared pleased, and *Jenny*, with a smiling countenance, told him of squire *Mildmay's* visit, and

and how he had given each of the children a shilling, “and,” added she, “since ’tis with the children’s money the supper was bought, ’tis but fair they should partake of it, so they all sat down together, and made a very comfortable supper, after which they drank the squire’s health in a draught of small beer; for they were always grateful to their benefactors.

When the children were gone to-bed *Thomas* and *Jenny* began to conjecture what the squire could mean by saying he would call again, they supposed it was to do some kind thing by them, for though he was a very unassuming man, yet, in a quiet way, he did a great deal of good; but it was in vain for them to guess what he meant to do for them. Mean time a week passed and he did not call. *Jenny* felt sorry; but

she was aware she had no right to complain; she had already received four shillings from him, and she was not of that grasping nature that might have disposed her to think, because a kind friend relieves her once that she was to expect more from the same quarter; in short, another week passed, and *Jenny* began to give up all hopes of again seeing her kind benefactor, when one day as she was spinning, and her children learning their spelling, in came Mr. *Mildmay*, up started the children, and down tumbled the books. *Jenny*, out of respect, left off spinning, and handing a chair to Mr. *Mildmay*, asked if he would please to be seated? he on his part desired she would sit down, as he wanted to have some conversation with her: he then asked her several questions

questions respecting her education, and found she had been very well brought up, that she could read very well, and had herself taught all her children to read, he then proposed to her to come with her husband and family and settle in his village; he said they should live rent free in a cottage near his house, that he would allow her five pounds a year for teaching six boys and six girls to read, that she and her husband might also keep the *Sunday* school, and moreover he would employ *Thomas* to work in his grounds, and that he would take care he should never want employment, or ever be put upon very hard work;—that she might, perhaps, get many day-scholars in the village, but every thing would depend on her diligence and attention, and if he himself was satisfied with their
behaviour

behaviour many other advantages might occur; in short, he bid her consult with her husband, and in three days let him know their determination. He now rose to depart, but, seeming to recollect himself, he said, with a smile of the most benevolent gentleness; “I have
“ been hindering your spinning, and
“ I must in justice make you amends,” so he put his hand in his pocket and took out two half crowns, which he gave her; *Jenny* thanked him very heartily, and, raising her eyes to heaven, prayed for blessings on his head for his goodness to her.

As soon as *Thomas* came in she told him all that had passed between her and the squire. *Thomas* went directly to his father's, and she went to her's, the parents on both sides agreed the young people could not do better than accept
this

this kind offer. On the day appointed *Thomas* put on his best cloaths and waited on the squire, and in three months they packed up their goods in a waggon, and, after taking leave of their neighbours with tearful eyes, they went to the village of *Oatley*. They first stopped at the squire's house to inquire whereabouts their cottage was, he walked with them, that he might enjoy their surprize, for in entering it they found it almost completely furnished. Mr. *Mildmay* had observed the furniture they had was but indifferent, and since poor *Thomas's* accident they had been too poor to buy any new; moreover, this house was much larger than the one they had left, so that their furniture, had it been ever so good, would have been insufficient in point of quantity.

Here

Here then settled *Thomas* and *Jenny Meadows*; they lived happily for many years, and were much esteemed and respected by their neighbours: the schools flourished exceedingly under their direction, not only the children improved in learning, but what was infinitely of more consequence, they improved in their morals and behaviour. *Thomas* used frequently to say, that the end of learning was to teach us our duty as men and as christians, and when once we were taught in what that duty consisted, we had no pretence for not practising it. He was himself a pattern of sobriety, honesty, and diligence, therefore was he well calculated to inculcate these qualities, for though precept may do *much*, example will undoubtedly do *more*. *Jenny* was no less attentive to the girls under her care, by whom she was much beloved

beloved for the gentleness and cheerfulness with which she instructed them.

These worthy people lived to see their children and grand-children grow up. Let us learn from their example the superior advantages attending a virtuous conduct; from the integrity of their character the surgeon first recommended them to the notice of Mr. *Mildmay*. Previous to his appearance, they had struggled hard with adversity. Their firm reliance on a merciful Providence taught them to yield submissively to their reverse of fortune; they felt unhappiness, but they were not overcome by it, since none but the wicked, who feel conscious they bring on their distress by their own misconduct, can be said to be completely wretched.





C/AB/—



